(c) whether an Expert Committee has been set up to consider the question of modernisation of the food processing system;

(d) if so, when this Committee was set up;

(e) whether any report has been submitted to Government by the Expert Committee; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI DILIP KUMAR RAY) : (a) to (f). No, Sir. Any technology including that of food processing is an on-going process and the Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore and other National Institutions of repute are continuously engaged in technology upgradation. While no Expert Committee for this specific purpose has been set up by this Ministry, we have been working in close collaboration with CFTRI and other institutions for various Research and Development related Projects.

Reclamation of Land

3789. SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have made any survey of the estimated hectarage of land under different forms of degradation out of the total land mass of the country;

(b) if so, the percentage of wasteland and measures taken for reclamation thereof;

(c) whether the Government have urged the intergrated companies in agro business to enter into a technical collaboration with Israel; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF WASTELANDS DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI CHANDRADEO PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Department of Wastelands Development has commissioned a National Identification Project with the collaboration of National Remote Sensing Agency to identify the extent of degraded lands in the country. Under this project, 241 critically affected districts having more than 5% of geographical area of the districts as wastelands have been mapped. However, no precise information about the extent of wastelands is available for the country. The total estimated extent of wastelands in these selected 241 districts has been estimated at 35.65 M.ha. In terms of percentage, the degraded lands work out at 17.49 to total geographical area covered. Statement showing different forms of degradation *vis-a-vis* total wastelands and percentage attached.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

STATEMENT

Category-wise Wasteland Area of 241 Critically Affected Districts in India

(Area in M.ha.)

S.No.	Category	Total W.L.	% to total Geographical Area covered
1	2	3	4
1.	Gullied and/or Ravinous land	1.886	0.92
2.	Upland with or without scrub	13.576	6.67
3.	Waterlogged and Marshy land	0.423	0.21
4.	Land affected by salinity/alkalinity-coastal/inlad	1.234	0.60
5.	Shifting cultivation area	1.810	0.89
6.	Under utilised/degraded notified forest land	10.690	5.25
7.	Degraded pastures/grazing land	1.339	0.66
8.	Degraded land under plantation crop	0.488	0.24
9.	Sands-Inland/Coastal	0.659	0.32
10.	Mining/Industrial wastelands	0.083	0.04

1	2	3	4
11.	Barren rocky/stony waste/sheet rock area	2.577	1.26
12.	Steep sloping area	0.419	0.20
13.	Snow covered and/or glacier area	0.463	0.23
	Total Wasteland Area	35.647	17.49

The Department of Wastelands Development is implementing various schemes for the development of non-forest wastelands in the country. The schemes in operation are : (i) Integrated Wastelands Development Project Scheme; (ii) Technology Development, Extension and Training Scheme; (iii) Investment Promotional Scheme; (iv) Grant-in-Aid to Voluntary Agencies; and (v) Wastelands Development Task Force.

Cogentrix Power Project

3790. SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any demand for a problem by a sitting Supreme Court Judge into the alleged kickback involved in the sanctioning of 1000 MW Cogentrix Power Project; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Cooking Gas

3791. SHRI P. NAMGYAL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether extreme cold and arctic climate of Ladakh Region of J and K State in devoid of forest and shortage of fire-wood for house-hold cookings and heating purposes;

(b) if so, whether keeping in view the shortage of fire-wood, the Government in 1995 had agreed to sanction LPG distribution agencies in all the 14 Block Headquarters of Ladakh Region; and

(c) if so, by when the proposed LPG distribution agencies are likely to be commissioned and if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : (a) In the interest of preservation of the forests and environment in the ecologically fragile hilly areas including Ladakh region, Government has given priority in the release of LPG connections.

(b) and (c). On 16.01.96 Government authorised IOC to open extension points at 4 block headquarters in Ladakh region, namely, Nubra, Nyoma, Khalatsi and Durbuk as the opening of independent distributorships has not been found to be economically viable. The proposed distribution centres are expected to be commissioned by January '97.

Scam

3792. SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT :

SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether DDA Engineer Member has been found involved in scams;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry has been made into it; and

(d) if so, the details of findings and action taken or proposed to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU) : (a) No such scam has come to the notice of the Government so far.

(b) to (d). Do not arise in view of (a) above.

[Translation]

Allotment of Developed Plots

3793. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether in reply to the Unstarred Question No. 4317 dated September 4, 1996 it was stated that 400 yards developed plots have been allotted to all those persons whose land had been acquired and whose names were recommended by the Land and Building Department of Delhi Administration;

(b) whether while replying Unstarred Question No. 1588 dated August 4, 1993, it had been admitted that one person was left out for allotment of 400 yards developed plot in Northern Area whose name was recommended by Delhi Administration before 1975;